

Message Text

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10

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-02 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12 VA-01

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FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6062

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E. O. 11652: NA

TAGS: SGEN, MARR

SUBJECT: USVA LEGISLATION

1. APPROACH OF JUNE 30 WITHOUT ENACTMENT OF VETERANS ADMINISTRATION LEGISLATION IS A CAUSE OF GROWING CONCERN HERE. I AM SURE THAT BOTH PHILIPPINE EMBASSY AND EA/ PHL HAVE KEPT APPROPRIATE ATTENTION FOCUSED UPON THIS PROBLEM WITHIN DEPARTMENT AND OF COURSE RECOGNIZE THAT SUPPORT OF VETERANS HOSPITAL IN PHILIPPINES IS A VERY SMALL ITEM IN A MAJOR PIECE OF DOMESTIC LEGISLATION. I WOULD NEVERTHE- LESS BE REMISS NOT TO NOTE, ONCE AGAIN, THE POSSIBLE IMPACT ON OVERALL US- PHIL RELATIONS SHOULD THESE ELEMENTS OF VA LEGISLATION NOT BE RENEWED.

2. UNCERTAINTY CONCERNING PROSPECTS FOR RENEWAL OF GRANTS- IN- AID HAS AROUSED ANXIETY AMONG THE LARGE VETERANS GROUP AND BROUGHT INCREASING INQUIRIES TO USVA DIRECTOR, WHICH HAVE BEEN ONLY MOMENTARILY EASED BY INFORMAL WORD OF PLAN TO DETACH GRANTS- IN- AID FROM REMAINDER OF AN APPARENTLY STALLED BILL. REPRESENTATIONS ARE NOW UNDERSTANDABLY COMING DIRECTLY TO ME, AND BEFORE LONG THE SAME ELEMENTS MAY SEEK POLITICAL LEVERAGE. PRESIDENT MARCOS HAS EXCELLENT RAPPORT WITH THE VETERANS COMMUNITY, OF COURSE, AND THEY IN TURN HAVE ACCESS TO HIM.

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3. THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES WILL BE THREATENED OR SIGNIFICANTLY CURTAILED SHOULD THE FOLLOWING PROPOSED FY 74 GRANTS NOT BE ENACTED:

A. HOSPITAL CARE FOR COMMONWEALTH ARMY AND
NEW PHILIPPINE SCOUT VETERANS - \$2,000,000

B. OUTPATIENT TREATMENT FOR SERVICE- CONNECTED
COMMONWEALTH ARMY AND NEW PHILIPPINE SCOUT VETERANS - \$195,000#

C. REPLACEMENT AND UPGRADING OF EQUIPMENT AT VETERANS
MEMORIAL HOSPITAL - \$ 50,000#

D. EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF VETERANS MEMORIAL HOSPITAL
PERSONNEL - \$50,000#

E. NURSING HOME CARE FOR COMMONWEALTH ARMY AND NEW
PHILIPPINE SCOUT VETERANS - \$250,000#

UNDER PENDING SENATE BILL 59 ITEMS B THROUGH E WOULD,
WE UNDERSTAND, BE INCLUDED WITHIN THE \$2,000,000 GRANT.

WE UNDERSTAND NO FURTHER CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE ACTIONS
ARE IN PROSPECT UNTIL JULY 9 AT EARLIEST. CURTALEMENT OF
HOSPITAL ADMISSIONS WILL BECOME NECESSARY BEGINNING
JUNE 1.

4. THESE SPECIFIC COSTS ARE SERIOUS ENOUGH IN TERMS OF
WELFARE OF ENTITLED VETERANS, BUT THE IMPACT WILL BE
BROADER, WITH US APPEARING " HEARTLESS" FOR JETTISONING
ONE OF THE PERSONAL LINKS BETWEEN US AND PHILIPPINES WHICH
FOR OLDER GENERATION FILIPINOS HAVE SUCH PROFOUND EMOTIONAL
CONTENT.

5. ALSO OF INTEREST TO US RELATIONS IS FACT THAT PHIL
VETERANS COMMUNITY REPRESENTS SUBSTANTIAL BLOC OF PRO- US
SENTIMENT WHICH SUPPORTS OUR OBJECTIVES IN PHILIPPINES. THIS
APPLIES PARTICULAR TO SECURITY MATTERS, INCLUDING THE ROLE
OF US MILITARY BASES HERE, WHICH ARE LIKELY SUBJECT OF US-
PHIL NEGOTIATIONS IN FORTHCOMING MONTHS.

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6. DURING THE PERIOD OF MARTIAL LAW, WITH SUPERVISION OF
PUBLIC MEDIA, WE HAVE HAD A RESpite FROM ABRASIVE CRITICISM.
BUT IF PHILIPPINE GOVT WERE ASKED FOR SUPPORT BY A
WELL ORGANIZED AND AGGRIEVED ELEMENT OF ITS CONSTITUENCY ON
THIS ISSUE, THE LEADERSHIP COULD HARDLY FAIL TO RESPOND.
HAMILTON

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